

Cor Series: Truth be Told

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Summary: Part three of the Cor Series. Eva meets with daddy dearest while Steph, Rem', and Mark head for "The Big Easy."

Cor Series: Truth be Told

> <meta name="GENERATOR"> Truth be Told Â©

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Truth Be Told

> The third installment in the Cor Series

> By Dimira Marka [dimira_99@yahoo.com]
 --

Night crept over New Orleans as it did every night, though there was something unique about this night. Two motorcycles that had not been there in years tore through the streets. They flew down the French quarter and then to the LeBeau home.

>
 Inside, Jean-Luc LeBeau and his son, Henri, saw them from the large picture window that looked to the street.

>
 "'Bout damn time dey showed," Henri said, leaning back in his chair.

>
 Jean-Luc walked to the door. He poked his head out, and seeing that it was only Remy, Marcus and Stephanie, stepped out. "Y' coulda been less conspicuous," he said firmly as the three dismounted.

>
 "We ain't worried," Stephanie said, pulling off her helmet. Her short white hair was plastered to her head from the helmet and from too much gel.

>
 "Well I am," Jean-Luc said seriously. "Now get in here."

>
 The three followed him into the house and through the halls. They found themselves in the main parlor. Henri stood up.

>
 "_Mes_ _frÃ"res_, _soeur_," he said, standing up and hugging each of them. They each hugged Jean-Luc as well.

>
 "Now sit," Jean-Luc commanded.

>
 Marcus sat down on the couch next to Henri, Remy sat down on a wing chair to Henri and Stephanie sat down on the arm of the couch. Jean-Luc sat down. They were all facing him.

>
 "I take it y' didn't get Eva t' come," Jean-Luc said, stating the obvious.

>
 "Non, she was up seein' our father I -- I mean our birth father, Magne" Stephanie tried to correct herself. "I didn't want ta bother her..." she said quietly. She bit her lip and looked up with a look of remorse to the old man. Henri looked at her, angry that she dared to say that to Jean-Luc.

>
 "I see..." Jean-Luc said, folding his hands in his lap.

>
 "Jus' what dis about, Popa?" Remy asked.

>
 Jean-Luc sighed, "Assassination." The three exchanged looks of confusion.

>
 "Of who, _pÃ"re_?" Stephanie asked.

>
 "Loren LeSouse," Henri said.

>
 "De assassin? Why, what 'e do?" Remy asked.

>
 "He a congressman now," Jean-Luc said. "An' 'e's still one vengeful bastard. He's threatening t' expose de whole t'eives guild."

>
 "He wouldn't dare!" Marcus gasped.

>
 "Y' know what he's capable of. 'E's an assassin, anything he can do t' get rid of de t'eives guild will put him -- an' de rest of de assassins -- on de up an' up," Henri said, and took a sip from a cup of coffee he had sitting on the end table.

>
 "But if we kill 'im it'll spark a guild war," Stephanie said.

>
 "Better dat den havin' de whole guild broken up and sent t' prison," Henri concluded.

>
 "So ya want us ta kill 'im?" Marcus asked.

>
 "Yes. If he exposes de guild, we'll be sent t' jail an' locked up for a long time, some o' us fer life. T'ink of all the lives of children whose parents 'ill be taken away, all of the teens who were like you when y' came 'ere," Jean-Luc said.

>
 "But killing isn't right," Stephanie said. "Aunt Mia raised us not ta kill 'er hurt others an' so did you."

>
 "But dis th' guild, Stephie," Henri said, looking at her. "Y' 'ave t' be loyal t' de guild after all it's given ya. And y' have t' do what it asks o' ya."

>
 "So ya called us here to call in a favor?" Stephanie growled, beginning to get angry.

>
 "No, demoiselle, what we give y' was a gift, an' we were happy t' do it," Jean-Luc said, narrowing his eyes at his oldest son, then looking up at his daughter. "It's because de guild is family, and y' never turn you're back on family."

>
 "I -- but" Stephanie stuttered. "Ya're right," she sighed, "ya're family, th' only one I've ever really evah had, but I am an X-Man, an' we don' kill."

>
 "Guild first, super hero second," Marcus said suddenly.

>
 "Always," agreed Remy.

>
 Stephanie thought for a moment and rubbed the back of her neck. After a moment's thought she said: "_Naturellement_."

>
 "So its agreed den? You'll do away wit' LeSouse?" They glanced among each other and looked up at Jean-Luc and they nodded. "Good, good..." Jean-Luc smiled. "I knew y' would. Now y' all had best get

some sleep." He stood up.

>
 "I'll take 'em upstairs," Henri said. He stood up and so did the others. He led them to the stairs. Jean-Luc watched his four children leave to room.

>
 Henri showed Stephanie and Remy to their rooms, and then he showed Marcus to his. He turned to walk away.

>
 "Henri?" Marcus asked.

>
 "Hmmm?" Henri turned around.

>
 "Does th' rest o' th' guild know we're 'ere?" Marcus asked.

>
 "Jus' some of de higher ranking members," he replied. "Dey didn't wan' t' start a stir."

>
 "Oh What about Addy?" he asked hesitatingly.

>
 Henri shook his head. "Non, Popa didn't want her t' get all worked up," Henri replied, stroking his thick mustache.

>
 "Can I see her?" he asked.

>
 "No, we don' wan' t' wake her up now, she still be dere in de morning," Henri smiled and Marcus nodded. Henri turned to leave.

>
 "Henri?"

>
 "Wha' now?"

>
 "We are here to repay a favor, aren't we?"

>
 "Course y' are. Y' know how de guild works. You an' Steph an' Remy are some of de best de guild has ever had at anything. Dey had no other way t' get y' back, since dey threw y' out, so dey said dat you owe a favor. That way they get y' back without going back on any vows dat dey made.

>
 "Fuckin' figures..." Marcus muttered.

>
 "Get some sleep, Mark. Jus' t'ink, ya'll get t' see Addy tomorrow," Henri smiled.

>
 "Yeah" Marcus said. "Night, 'enri."

>
 "Night, _frÃ"re_," Henri turned and headed back down the stairs. Marcus headed into his room to sleep.

--

The covers on the bed were rough from not being used. The room smelled sterile like a hospital. Certainly no one had lived in this room for a long time, or prehaps ever.

>
 Eva sat up and stretched. She slipped out of the bed. The floor was cold metal. She shivered and scurried to the small bathroom adjoined to her room.

>
 After a quick shower she dressed and combed her hair. She sighed and looked in the mirror. "God, whata ya think ya're doin' 'ere, Cor?" she asked herself. "Eh, it's no matter now..." she sighed and shook her head. She took her towel and rung the excess water from her hair. She took the hair that stretched almost down to her ankles and braided it. Then she walked from the room and into the hallway.

>
 It was, for the most part, very quiet. There was an occasional chatter of people here and there. When she passed them they stopped talking and shrunk into the corners, cowering, hiding from her. She tried to smile at them and be friendly, but they still only responded by running away like mice.

>
 After moments of walking silently and undisturbed, she was bothered by a seedy little man she though that she might have gotten rid of when she first entered the station and her father had told him to leave her be. "Cor?" He startled her, and she jumped. She'd been walking without interruption for the past 20 minutes without a soul bothering her.

>
 She whirled around. "What is it?!" she cried.

>
 "I simply wanted to know why you were wandering the halls," he said. "Is that not a reasonable query, considering this is my station?"

>
 "This, Cortez, is not your station. It's my father's." Eva crossed her arms.

>
 "Well, then, should I take you to him? I assume that you came here to see him, and not to spy for your friends," Cortez said. Eva narrowed her eyes at him.

>
 "If ya weren't my father's successor, and if this weren't 'is home, I'd hit ya so fast ya wouldn't know what hit ya. Now let me be, I can find myself around this place just fine. I believe his exact word were, 'Make yourself at home'." Eva motioned with her hand to shoo him away. He turned away reluctantly, muttering something under his breath.

>
 Eva shook her head and then continued on her constitutional about the station. She came eventually to a large window that looked out over space, and at the moment, was focusing right on the earth. She stopped and gazed out, crossing her arms across her chest. As she stared out into the nothingness, she began to realize just where she was: space. _Eva Margot Cor does not belong in space. She belongs on earth, where her powers originate and where she was born_, she thought to herself. She put her hand on the window's surface.

>
 "I'm attuned to the very primal heart of the earth. I draw my energy from it. Erik does as well. How can he stand to live here? I've been here less than 24 hours and I can barely take it. How can he do it?" Eva mused quietly to herself.

>
 "We do what we must" a voice came from behind her. She wheeled around to see her father.

>
 "_Abruti_! Ya scared me!" she exclaimed. She was lucky that he didn't know much French, or he'd be severely insulted and angry.

>
 "I've done what I must to keep myself, but more importantly, my people safe," he said, looking critically at the smaller woman. She looked up at him from where she was. Her total height was only about five feet two inches. Erik towered over her a foot.

>
 "But the earth, we are both so acutely attuned ta its magnetic poles and its very heart. I don't understand how ya can take livin' here," Eva said compassionately, motioning widely with her arms.

>
 "I've done what I must. We are not safe on earth so long as humanity rules it with the iron fist of hate and oppression. There is nowhere safe for us anywhere there. I miss the earth and long for it, but with the threat of humanity, only here are we safe."

>
 "That's not true. There are kind, decent humans on earth. My mother was human, yer wife, Moria MacTaggart, Gabrielle Haller..."

>
 "I am all to aware of the exceptions to what I have just said, but I did not invite you here to discuss ethics and philosophy with you, my dear," Erik said.

>
 "Yer right, I'm sorry," Eva said. "Let's change the subject."

>
 There was silence. They both stared out of the window. Eventually Erik looked down at Eva. "Have you eaten yet today?"

>
 "Oh, no, I haven't," Eva replied.

>
 "I was on my way to eat breakfast when I stumbled upon you. Perhaps you would like to join me?" Erik asked, his face softening.

>
 Eva smiled a half smile, "I suppose I'll have ta do that."

>
 "Ah, good then," Erik said. He motioned down the hall. The two walked toward the dining hall, not knowing that the whole time Fabian Cortez was less than five feet away from them around a corner, listening to all that they said.

--

The breakfast was as normal as any -- eggs, toast, and coffee -- with the exception of just how awkward it was to both of them. They had never had a normal conversation, or spent more than twelve hours together before.

>
 The hall that they sat in was a huge banquet hall that must have been set up for large dinners with all of his Acolytes' highest members. The ceiling must have been 20 feet tall. The large airy openness of the room added to the discomfort of them both.

>
 After Erik had finished his food, he looked up at Eva. She was already done with her food and was sipping her coffee. Erik wiped his face and leaned back in his chair. He cleared his throat.

>
 "Good, eh? I've some of the best cooks in the world on this station," he said.

>
 "What an accomplishment," Eva mumbled under her breath, the coffee cup close enough to her face that he could not see her lips move, only hear her mumble something.

>
 "What was that?"

>
 "Nothing," Eva said, looking up at him. She set her coffee cup down.

>
 Erik sighed and there was a time of silence. Then he spoke. "If I may ask a rather personal question of you my dear--?"

>
 "Ask away," Eva interrupted.

>
 "Ah, yes, well" he began. He cleared his throat. "Why did Sinister have you locked up? What has he to gain from you?"

>
 Eva chuckled slightly and set her coffee mug down, "I know for sure he wants our power. It's a matter of why, and for what. I can't imagine why he just doesn't clone us already, I'm sure it would be easier than spending his precious time hunting us like dogs I just wish I could do something to stop it Anything"

>
 "The man has done a lot of things unexplainable to this day," Erik said. He could tell by the look on her face that Eva was less than comfortable on the subject. "What about LeBeau? How did you end up with him?"

>
 Eva sighed and looked at the table top, "When we were 12, almost 13, Mia died, and we were in a good foster home. But they were going to keep Stephanie an' I, an' send Marcus off ta a children's home. We couldn't bear the thought of bein' split up, so we ran away as fast as we could. It took up some two years of hopping boxcars and what not until we made it to New Orleans. When we got there, we were starving in the streets. Remy an' 'is brother, Henri, found us and took us to their home."

>
 Eva sort of half smiled and then looked up at Erik. "Jean-Luc was furious when they drug us back there, but then after a while he grew warm ta us. An' he spent almost two years in court trying to adopt us. He eventually did, too. Th' rest is history."

>
 "What luck that you found your way to that man's home, and to have him take all three of you in And to fight for you for two years I should like to meet and thank him sometime."

>
 Eva smiled. "He always said that he'd like to meet and thank the man whom let him have us" she said, amused. Erik smiled a bit, which intrigued Eva considering his usual demeanor. Erik finished the last gulp of coffee in his mug.

>
 "So, tell me, my dear, did your aunt make a good mother?"

>
 Eva's eyes suddenly grew wide with the question. "I--I suppose that she did," she replied softly, stumbling over the words.

>
 "You seem reluctant. Why is that?"

>
 "I'm not reluctant," Eva said. "I simply said that I suppose

she made a fine mother."

>
 "I sensed hesitation to say that in your voice," Erik said, "Just how good of a mother was Mia Cor?"

>
 "She was fine. She taught us morals and ethics..." Eva trailed off.

>
 "I see," Erik said. "And just what of her untimely death?"

>
 Eva looked up at him for a moment. Lie, or tell the truth? she asked herself. "Alcohol poisoning," she said.

>
 Erik looked a little shocked. "She was an alcoholic, was she?"

>
 "Yes, she was quite fond of a little whiskey after a hard day," Eva said. "Or after every day... and then some..."

>
 "Did she hurt you?" Erik asked. Genuine concern rang in his voice.

>
 "Of course she did, she was a drunk," Eva said.

>
 "She *beat* you?"

>
 "Like I said, she was a drunk. Drunks beat their kids for fun."

>
 Erik gasped at the revelation. He couldn't believe it. "How long did it go on?" he asked.

>
 "No less than four years," Eva replied somberly.

>
 "I'm so sorry. If I had been there--"

>
 "But ya weren't, which brings me to a question I've wanted to ask ya for a long time. It's of a rather personal nature. May I ask?"

>
 "Yes, I suppose that you may, it is only fair," Erik replied.

>
 Eva took in a deep breath and sat silent for a moment, and closed her eyes. She looked back up and then spoke. "Why why did ya leave my mother?"

>
 Oh, God no, not this question he thought. "It... It is difficult to explain," he stammered.

>
 "I've got time," Eva said quickly, as if she had been anticipating him to say that.

>
 Erik drew in a deep breath and collected his thoughts. "I spent nearly two years secluded in that cabin with Ariel. We left only once, and that was when I took her into space with my powers so that she could see the beauty of the earth. She'd never been more than hundred miles away from her home in her life, and she was content with that. But I was not. I was a gypsy. My entire life before the war was spent traveling, and I did not want to stay in one place my entire life like that, it was not how I was raised." He paused for a while, as if that was to explain all.

>
 "Go on," Eva coaxed, leaning in.

>
 "I could not take staying there for so long, and Ariel did not want to leave her home. I left to get away. I swore" he stopped for a moment. "I swore by the children we'd planned to have one day that I would only be gone for five months, no more," he said.

>
 Eva's mouth dropped at the revelation of what he had sworn his love by: her. He continued to speak. "I told her I was going to search for some family I though may had survived through the war that I had not had time to look for in the time before I met her."

>
 "But ya weren't looking for family, were ya? Ya lied to 'er."

>
 "Oh, no, I do not want to say that I was lying-" he began to say.

>
 "But ya did." She stood up, tossing her napkin onto the table. "Thank you for your hospitality, Magneto." She turned and headed for the door. Erik jumped up.

>
 "Eva! Eva, wait!" he walked after her. He continued to badger

her as she headed down the hall to the nearest airlock. Once he reached her he put his hand on her shoulder. She stopped suddenly, and a blast of slivery purple energy threw him into the wall.

>
 "Don'tcha *ever* touch me!" she hissed. "Mia may 'ave been a drunk, but she taught us values, and one of 'em was never ta lie to the one ya love! I nevah though anyone could be so" Her odd Canadian-Southern-Cajun-accent grew thicker, and her anger and frustration grew.

>
 "You ...do not ... understand ..." Erik choked; the blast had knocked the wind out of him.

>
 "I understand plenty enough, Magneto. Don't ya evah try an' come near me or my brother or sister, or ya'll wish ya hadn't. So help me God, I'll kill ya," Eva snarled. She turned and walked away. She stopped a few steps later and stared forward as Erik struggled up.

>
 "Ya wanna know what th' funniest parta this whole thing is? Ya never, evah looked for my mother when ya returned and found her missing, didja? That's a stupid question, I know ya didn't, cause ya'd've found 'er if ya did ... "

>
 "Eva," he wheezed, "hear me out!"

>
 "... An' ya'd've had a woman who'd love ya, an' kid's ta call yar own. All ya got now is two dead lovers and the bastard children ya had with 'em, and all five o' us hate yer guts! Ah know all too damn well what Wanda an' Pietro think of ya; not even they have any tolerance fer ya. Some family ya've made..."

>
 "I loved your mother!" Erik bellowed suddenly. "And I did look for her! I looked for longer than you realize. I gave up because I thought that her leaving the cabin without telling me was her way of saying she didn't want me anymore. Because if she loved me she would have stayed at the cabin and waited for me. If I had seen the note that she had left me then instead of two weeks ago, things *would* have been different."

>
 "Ya know how stupid ya sound right now?"

>
 "I realize it might sound ridiculous, but..." Erik said, standing up.

>
 "It doesn't sound ridiculous, it sounds like an excuse a five year old'd come up with," Eva said, crossing her arms.

>
 "It makes sense to those who have had people they love leave them for stupid reasons and inexplicable ones. Has a person you loved ever left you?"

>
 "Of course, my mother, my aunt..." Eva retorted.

>
 "A lover, Eva, a man."

>
 Eva stood silent for a moment. "No," she whispered. "I've never loved a man, because every time any woman loves a man in this family, she gets left alone and heartbroken and pregnant!" Eva screamed, enraged. "It's happened ta my grandmother, my mother an' it happened ta Stephie! I'll never let myself get hurt like that!"

>
 "Eva, I didn't know... Stephanie has a child!?" he gasped.

>
 "That is totally beside the point right now." Eva hissed through her teeth. "The point is that if ya ever come near me or Mark or Steph again, ya'll be hurtin'. An' if Ah ever catch ya in New Orleans 'er at th' LeBeaus' 'ouse" Eva pulled Erik up with her powers as if she was grabbing him by the collar. "Do ya understand what I just told ya?" she asked him calmly.

>
 "I am not afraid of you," Erik said.

>
 "Well, ya oughta be, 'cause I'm more powerful than ya. Ya can tell can't ya, that's why ya aren't fightin' back. Ya can feel the energy..." Eva let out a shuddering breath. "Now, da ya understand what I've said 'ere?"

>
 "I am not scared..." he began. Eva's eyes glowed silver and

his eyes began to roll into the back of his head. Eva had slowly begun to cut the blood off to his brain and to his heart. "Y-yes" he choked out. Eva let him fall limply to the floor. He coughed and sputtered.

>
 "Good," Eva said lightly. She turned to the airlock she had been headed for; it was only a few feet away. She glanced back one last time. "An' for gods sake, don't try and follow me." With her powers, she pried open the heavy doors and contained a small atmosphere for herself to protect her from the cold harshness of space and to keep the space station's atmosphere intact. When she was out of them, she slammed the doors behind her, leaving Erik lying on the floor.

--

Remy, Marcus and Stephanie sat around the kitchen table. Mattie, Jean-Luc's housekeeper and the one who acted as a mother to Remy and to Stephanie, Eva, and Marcus when they arrived, stood over the stove.

>
 "Maddie, this is great." Stephanie said.

>
 "Non, it's great t' see y' three after so long. Y' know how happy Addy's gonna be t' see y'?" Mattie said, looking back at the three, focusing on Marcus.

>
 "She's gonna be all over you" Remy said, nudging Marcus with his elbow.

>
 "Hey! That's not fair, Rem'. That's because yar jealous" Stephanie joked.

>
 "Shut up, both of y'! I'm appalled," Mattie said. "Y've got nothin' t' worry about. Addy's not gonna hate y', she loves you. That's why she married y'."

>
 "But, I can't help but worry. I haven't seen her in four years"

>
 "Five years, two months and four days. You still can not keep time," said a thick French accent from the door.

>
 Marcus stood up. "Addy" The woman smiled hopelessly. They walked to each other and embraced. Sobs erupted. Quickly, Stephanie, Mattie, and Remy left.

--

Eva's feet touched down on Lake Oren. The cold of winter had turned it to ice overnight. She trekked across it silently. The night's cold ripped at her exposed cheeks. She pulled her coat around herself tighter and continued to walk.

>
 Without words she passed through North Bend, Nova Scotia. She entered a small coffeehouse in downtown. It was the only thing open at that time of the morning. Only a few construction workers and mail carriers were out and about so early. The sun was not even yet making its daily struggle to kill off the moon for the day.

>
 She ordered a coffee, black. And when she had finished it, left quickly.

>
 All Saints Cemetery was on the very northeast corner of the tiny town.

>
 "I figured ya'd be here," Eva said, walking up to Erik who stood over Ariel Cor's headstone.

>
 "I though that you were going to kill me if you ever saw me again," Erik said, looking at his youngest daughter.

>
 "I ain't gonna spill yer blood over my mother's grave," Eva said, looking at the headstone.

>
 Impressive, she can control her anger, Erik thought.

>
 "But ya've no idea how tempin' it is" Eva said quietly, clenching her fists. She released her fists and her claws slipped out.

>
 "You, my dear, approached me, and I never heard you say that I could no visit this place," Erik said.

>
 "True, Magneto," Eva said.

>
 There was a long silence as the two stood staring at the polished hunks of granite. The silence only the wind dared break. After several moments, Eva spoke.

>
 "Ya loved her?" she questioned.

>
 Erik looked at her; she stared straight at the headstone. "Of course I loved her. I loved her with all my heart."

>
 "You're tellin' the truth," Eva said. "That's all I need ta hear." Eva turned away and Erik watched as his daughter flew away.

--

"Can I see some ID?" the security guard asked Stephanie. She smiled and reached into the pocket of her suit. She removed an ID badge that was supposed to be clipped to her blouse. She handed it to the man. He looked at the picture and then up at her.

>
 "Alice Jeners, eh?" the guard said the name on the badge. Stephanie nodded.

>
 "That is my name," Stephanie said, trying her best to suppress her accent. She smiled personably at the guard, hoping that it might help speed up the process. The guard chuckled. She brushed a lock of brown-black hair out of her face. _Damn wig_, she cursed in her mind.

>
 "Go on through, then, Miss," he said and waved her through the metal detector. She continued down the halls until she reached the actual doors of the congress. Behind them all the congressmen and women were in session. There was a security guard at the door. Stephanie ignored him and reached for the door handle.

>
 The man grabbed her hand. "I'm sorry," he said. "This area is closed off at this time. You can't go in." He peered at the badge on her blouse.

>
 Stephanie narrowed her eyes at him, and then slammed her fist into his face as hard as she could. He fell unconscious on the floor. "That is too bad, because I need to see someone in here." _Crude way ta put the man out,_ '_Alice_' she thought to herself. She moved the man out of sight into a corner. She walked back to the door and slipped on a pair of sunglasses. She opened the door and walked in.

>
 She walked down an isle of chairs with her head held high, oblivious to anyone else in the room. She didn't see LeSouse anywhere.

>
 The speaker was in front of all the congressmen reading off bills to be voted on. "And now Be it enacted by congress that" He saw Stephanie. "Who are you? You are not supposed to be I here!"

>
 "I am here for Loren Antony LeSouse!" she said. A man on the far side of the room stood up.

>
 "I'm Loren LeSo Oh my God, you!" he gasped when he saw who it was. Stephanie smiled. The man stummbled back. "C-Cor" he gasped softly.

>
 "I am sorry, Loren, but I have got to do this," she said. _Actually, I ain't sorry_, she thought. She raised her hands and the air in the room charged with electricity. The all lights on the ceiling exploded and all the electricity from them seemed to flow right into LeSouse's body. The room went black from the lack of

windows.

>
 Stephanie walked from the room as if nothing was wrong. As the ambulances and police arrived, she was out of the building, and walking toward a black Lexus with Marcus, Remy, and Henri in it. She crossed the street and opened the back door.

>
 She climbed inside quickly and pulled off the wig and sunglasses. "So y' did it?" Henri asked as she tossed the wig on the seat next to Remy. She used her dry hands to try and slick stray pieces of hair out of her eyes. Marcus leaned over the seat so he was looking into the back.

>
 "I was worried, ya didn't come out right away when the police cars were pullin' up" Marcus began to say at the same time. Stephanie just smiled at him and winked.

>
 "Did y' do it!?" Henri demanded, slamming his fist on the seat back.

>
 "'Course I did, 'enri, Alice Jeners always gets th' job done," she smiled and pulled off her jacket.

>
 "Ya use that alias too much, Stephie, one o' these days th' FBI's gonna catch onto you," Marcus said. "Alice Jener's has done it all. Drug smuggling, bank heists, robberies..."

>
 "Yeah, so? Ya think I'm scared o' the government?" Stephanie asked. "Most powerful mutant on th' face of the planet" she mumbled. "I got no reason to be scared." She wiped the lipstick and eye makeup off. "'Sides, ya make it sound like all I ever do is commit crimes. The last time Alice did anything was seven years ago, an' I did it *all* at th' guilds orders."

>
 "True but all the same" Marcus trailed off.

>
 "Let's get th' 'ell outta 'ere, I don' wanna risk anyt'ing," Henri said, starting up the car.

--

Eva sipped the coffee she'd made. She looked up at the professor. He normally did not pry into the private lives of his students, but when one of them comes into the mansion at twelve thirty at night--nearly hypothermic and frostbitten--he can not help but to do so.

>
 "Would ya like some?" Eva asked, rubbing her feet together for warmth.

>
 "No, Eva," Charles said. "I'm quite all right, thank you."

>
 Eva shrugged. "Suit yerself."

>
 "If you do not mind me asking, Eva, why did you return so soon and in such a condition?"

>
 "I" Eva took in a deep breath. "I found out what Eri -- Magneto -- was really like. Ah know who he really is now. He said things Even lies would 'ave been better" she then chuckled, "An' I don' care how all-purpose my uniform is, it's no match for a Canadian winter."

>
 "Would you like to talk about it?" Charles offered.

>
 "Yeah, all I think y' need is some thinsulate or maybe somethin' from the Shi'ar"

>
 He chuckled to himself, amazed that she could have a sense of humor about everything she'd been through recently. "About your father, Eva," Charles corrected her.

>
 She paused, her mind working for a moment as she thought of what she should do. "_Non_, I don' wanna right now"

>
 "Well, you know my door is always open," he offered.

>
 "I'll remember that. Thanks, Charles," Eva said, smiling at him.

>
 She walked from the room. She pulled off her coat and sat down on the couch in the main living room in the mansion. She curled her

feet under herself and pulled a blanket over herself. She turned on the TV to the news.

>
 "Topping our news tonight, Congressman Loren Antony LeSouse of the 5th district of Louisiana was killed by a terrorist attack today. Police and FBI are looking for this woman." A fuzzy picture of a woman taken from a security camera came on the screen.

>
 "Alice Jeners. Witnesses say that she is a mutant and used her powers to kill LeSouse early this morning while in the middle of a congressional in Louisiana session. Ms. Jeners is wanted on previous counts of fraud, robbery, arson and manslaughter. Commenting today was chief of police for Baton Rouge, David Oleck"

>
 Eva's mouth dropped. "_Deiu_! Charles?" she called, still staring at the TV.

>
 He came into the room, "Yes, Eva?"

>
 "Where's my sister at?" She still stared at the TV, her face glued in an expression of shock.

>
 "I'm not sure. She, Slip, and Gambit left for New Orleans. They didn't say why."

>
 "Oh, no" she whispered.

>
 "What is it? Is something wrong?"

>
 "Somethin' bad's up" Eva said. "The guild calls, that's bad; the calls and want's them -- us -- in New Orleans, that's worse; the guild calls, they go to New Orleans and don't say why, that's all hell breaking loose." Eva turned back and looked at him. "Ya know where Storm is?"

>
 "I believe she is in her greenhouse," Charles said.

>
 Eva stood up and ran out of the house and across the back lawn to the greenhouse barefooted. She threw open the door and was hit by a blast of humid air that choked her.

>
 "'Ro?" she called. Ororo stepped out from a wall of greenery.

>
 "Yes? Eva? What is wrong? What are you doing back?"

>
 "Where's Remy an' Mark an' Steph?" she sputtered. "Why'd they go ta Orleans?"

>
 "I do not know. They left three days ago, and they did not tell me why they were going. I do not understand why, because they are no longer a part of the Guild; they were thrown out years ago."

>
 "_MÃ're_ _d'un_ _dieu_!" she cried. She turned and ran out of the building and took off flying.

>
 "Eva!" Ororo cried. She ran after her.

>
 #Let her go, Storm.#

>
 #But Charles, I can not just let her run off on her own#

>
 #Just let her go, Ororo, she will be fine.#

Epilogue

> Over the Catskill Mountains of New England, a woman's mutant powers give out for an unknown reason and she falls to the snow.

> In a lab hidden where no eyes look, a madman plots his next move as he sees this woman fall.

> In a little bar in the French Quarter of New Orleans, Louisiana, three mutant outlaws are getting drunk, oblivious to the spy two seats away.

> In a space station, looking out to the stars, one who never cries, cries when he swore to himself he never would again.

The End... (for the time being)

End
file.